

Technology and The Family Caregiver Support Program **COVID-19 Guidance**

Date: Wednesday, May 27, 2020

Time: 1:00 PM

Family Caregiver Support Program Measures

Throughout the COVID-19 emergency period, to encourage social distancing and stop the spread of the pandemic, the agency encourages providers, participants and their caregivers to avoid visiting nursing homes or other residential care facilities if possible. Alternatively, the agency strongly encourages the innovative use of communication devices and other technology to connect nursing facility residents with their loved ones. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Stimulus (CARES) Act provided additional funding to Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) for the Family Caregiver Support Program under Title III E of the Older Americans Act.

1. KDADS [Field Service Manual](#) 3.8.4D states, “A Caregiver Assessment Plan (CAP) (SS-025) must be completed for each caregiver receiving services, excluding Assistance and Information. It is the AAA’s responsibility to ensure that all required information is obtained.”
 - For the duration of the COVID-19 emergency period, the CAP will not be required for caregivers accessing a nursing facility communication program administered by the AAA.
 - KDADS recommendation is to provide access to the communication device on site rather than in the home of caregivers.
2. The following is **required** to be tracked and reported annually:
 - Number of caregivers served by the communication program;
 - Number of communication devices purchased;
 - Total expenditure for the communication program.
3. Purchasing such devices is permissible under III-B to assist in addressing social isolation; under III-C to assist in ordering food and meals; under III-E to assist in the provision of virtual caregiver support.
4. AAAs are encouraged to follow the CDC guidelines below to prevent the spread of COVID-19:
 - Encourage participants and caregivers to stay home if they are sick;
 - Encourage frequent hand washing;
 - Encourage the use of cloth face coverings;
 - Maintain at least 6 feet of distance between building occupants;
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched services, including technology and communication devices;
5. AAAs are encouraged to develop policies and procedures governing the provision and usage of communication devices and other technology to address social isolation and provide virtual caregiver support. Please consider the following:

- Provide training and assistance, as needed, to ensure that the caregiver understands how to use the technology.
- If devices are to be provided on loan, or permanently, consider issues that may arise and establish criteria for the provision;
- How IT support will be provided;
- How will upgrades to software be provided;
- Who is responsible if the device is broken, lost or stolen;
- If the technology will be used for the duration of the public health emergency or an ongoing, sustainable program.

This guidance shall be in place until rescinded.

Amy Penrod

Commissioner

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